

WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE?

Acupuncture involves the insertion of fine needles into specific points of the body to stimulate or relax the body. The different types of acupuncture are:

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE (TCM)

Traditional Chinese Medicine traces back to 1000BC and is based on energy (Qi pronounced "chi") and its flow through channels, known as meridians throughout the body. If this energy is flowing freely, the body is thought to be in a healthy state. However illness and injury can stop or excessively increase the flow of energy and is likely to increase signs and symptoms. The energy flow can be affected by inserting needles into acupuncture points, this helps to restore the normal flow of energy and relieve signs and symptoms, including pain.

WESTERN APPROACH

Western acupuncture is based on the release of chemicals in the nervous system, such as pain relieving and anti-inflammatory. It also involves specific relaxation of muscles (trigger point acupuncture). Research shows the effectiveness of acupuncture for pain relief, therefore is used by physiotherapists as part of a comprehensive treatment plan.



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If you require this leaflet in other formats or languages please contact PALS: 0800 917 8504

এই লিফলেটেটি যদি আপনার অন্য কোনো ফরম্যাটে বা ভাষায় প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে অনুগ্রহ করে

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ACUPUNCTURE



INFORMATION
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MAKING A
DIFFERENCE
FOR YOU,
WITH YOU

WILL ACUPUNCTURE WORK FOR ME?

Physiotherapists use acupuncture for a number of reasons, mainly to reduce pain. It can be used in the treatment of a variety of conditions, such as; acute and chronic injuries, arthritis and rheumatism, back and neck pain, muscle and joint problems and sports injuries.

It does not work for everybody and every condition, however, positive results are achieved when more conventional treatment has failed. Acupuncture is not spiritual, therefore you don't have to believe in acupuncture for it to work.

The effects of acupuncture are cumulative, with the pain relief building up as the treatment progresses. Some people respond well, while others may see little benefit until they have had a number of treatments (this is more likely with a chronic condition). Sometimes, the condition may become slightly worse at first. This is not a bad sign as it usually means the condition will respond eventually. The results of a number of controlled clinical trials have been used by NICE to inform their recommendation of acupuncture as a treatment for low back pain.

HOW DOES ACUPUNCTURE WORK?

The physiotherapist will select points that are:

- Close to the painful area
- Distal (away from the area)

The needles are sterile, single use and disposable. You may feel a mild ache, numbness, warmth and heavy sensation as the needle is inserted (known as 'De Qi'). This is a sign that the body is reacting to the acupuncture. The needles may be stimulated by a twisting motion at regular intervals throughout your treatment to regain this sensation and cause local inflammatory changes.

Treatment time can vary from two minutes to 10 or 30 minutes. The number of needles may also vary depending on your condition and symptoms.

FOLLOWING TREATMENT

After treatment you may feel immediate relief of symptoms. Some people will feel no immediate difference, however will feel a gradual improvement, whilst others may feel an initial increase or more intense symptoms. This may last up to 24 hours, and is normally followed by a period of improvement. Some people feel refreshed and relaxed following acupuncture while others may feel very tired. To begin with, it is a good idea to arrange appointments, to allow yourself time to rest. We recommend avoiding driving long distances or carrying out strenuous activity immediately after treatment. If you do feel unusually tired, avoid driving or operating machinery until this feeling passes.

The number of treatments you need will vary according to your response to acupuncture. Normally, after three to four sessions it will be clear as to whether acupuncture is beneficial and a decision will be made whether to continue with treatment. If there is no change in symptoms or if any change is temporary, no further treatment is required.

Please advise your physiotherapist if you experience any unusual side effects following treatment or if you have any further questions.



BEFORE YOUR FIRST SESSION

Please ensure of the following before your first session of acupuncture:

- You have signed the consent forms
- You have eaten at least four hours prior to treatment
- You are wearing appropriate clothing